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ABSTRACT

During the 1996-97 school year, 63 one-teacher primary schools were identified in Great Britain and 94 of these were surveyed. Three of the schools surveyed were in England, 47 in Scotland, and 4 in Wales. The majority of teachers in these schools were female, married, and 40-49 years old; had over 20 years teaching experience, with 5-15 years in the present school; and held teaching certificates only. Most schools were located in remote areas, many of them on Scottish islands. Most teachers managed all aspects of the school without additional compensation. In addition to regular instruction, teachers performed administrative duties; visited with parents; performed custodial duties; managed lunch preparation; and taught remedial reading, special education, computers, physical education, art, and music. Overwhelmingly, the teachers liked their work and were committed to the small school and its family atmosphere. Most schools served fewer than 10 families. In the past 5 years, 45 percent of schools had increased enrollment, while 11 percent had decreases of more than five students. All schools reported special activities such as field trips, and virtually all reported that students used computers daily in school. Most school buildings were 100-150 years old, and many lacked various facilities. All schools enjoyed high or average community support, and many were used for community activities. Teachers also reported the schools' strengths, weaknesses, and unique qualities. Includes 12 data tables. (SV)

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One Teacher Primary Schools

England, Scotland and Wales, 1996-97

Prepared by Brigham Young University for

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Small rural one-teacher schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world. A study of one-teacher schools in the United States was completed last year. A companion study of one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales is now underway. This presentation summarizes information about these schools regarding teachers, students, school buildings and community support.

This inquiry considers the condition of government supported one-teacher primary schools in the British Isles during the 1996-97 school year. The data collected from this study was from teachers of these schools regarding the teachers, students, school facilities and rural communities where one-teacher schools exist. In order to locate the one-teacher schools in England, Scotland and Wales and obtain the data, a questionnaire was sent to teachers of schools in rural communities whose school population was less than twenty-five pupils. (England, Scotland and Wales school statistics do not identify one-teacher primary schools.) Underlying this research is a basic question: How do one-teacher primary schools serve the students and the community?

As a research assistant under the direction of Dr. Ivan Muse, Professor of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations, Brigham Young University I conducted this investigation from January through June 1997 while living in London, England. Before returning to the United States at the end of July 1997, I visited a sampling of one-teacher primary schools described in this study. Dr. Muse is actively involved with rural school research and is recognized by the National Rural Education Association for his distinguished involvement with and celebration of rural schools.

A 1996 study in the United States (Jensen, A., *One-teacher public elementary schools,* 1996) revealed

information worthy of future study. This report indicates the number of operating one-teacher schools is in significant decline. The quality of education available in one-teacher schools has improved over time through better technology, advanced communication, modernization of transportation and facilities and teacher preparation. These one-teacher schools are important to the communities they serve. Moreover, teachers, students and communities indicate satisfaction with this method of education.

In the early stages of the British investigation, I studied the demographics in the British Isles and I believed there were existing one-teacher schools in rural areas. Prior to initiating this study, I collected current information from education officers in the Isles of Scilly, the Shetland Islands, and the Western Isles confirming the existence of one-teacher schools on these islands. I also discovered that in Scotland there were only nineteen students per teacher, thus assisting in the identification of the Scottish schools. Meanwhile, school address labels were obtained from the UK School Government Publishing Company. Three hundred forty-three surveys were sent to teachers of schools that might be one-teacher schools. I sent surveys as follows: eighty-one schools in England, two hundred fifteen schools in Scotland, and forty-seven in Wales.

Ninety-three surveys were returned, with fifty-four indicating positive identification of one-teacher schools, thirty-nine indicating the school had employed more than one teacher, and other schools noted that increased enrollment during the past year resulted in the hiring of more teachers. It is interesting to note that staffing adjustments are made through out the year as school enrollment changes. Five returns indicated that the schools had been disbanded.

Phone calls were made to fifty schools that did not return surveys. During these phone conversations I

learned that many of these schools had over twenty-five pupils enrolled, several had over one-hundred enrolled and six schools had changed within the past five years from a one-teacher school to a three or more teacher school. The reasons for the changes in these six schools were caused by families moving from urban to rural areas. Nine additional one-teacher schools were mentioned by teachers on the returned surveys. I spoke to the teachers of these additional schools and confirmed their status as one-teacher primary schools. Three reasons were given by teachers for not returning the surveys (1) lack of time to complete survey, (2) fear of being recognized as a one-teacher school because of closure threats, and (3) distrust in surveys.

As of August 1, 1997, the researcher positively identified sixty-three one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales existing during the school year 1996-97. Fifty-four were surveyed.

England: three schools surveyed; five identified

Scotland: forty-seven surveyed; fifty-three identified

Wales: four surveyed; five identified

Data Obtained from Surveys Completed in Spring, 1997

The data is reported in four general areas: teachers, students, school buildings and community support. The majority of teachers in one-teacher schools in England, Scotland and Wales in 1996-97 were female, married, in the forty to forty-nine years old age group and had spouses that were employed in semi-skilled or skilled jobs. Typically these teachers have spent over twenty years in the teaching field with five to fifteen years teaching experience in their present one-teacher schools and expected to teach in the same school next year. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed held certificates only, 19

percent Bachelor degrees, 11 percent Bachelor degrees with a postgraduate certificate of education (PCGE), and 11 percent Master's degrees.

Seventy-five percent of the teachers planned on teaching in the same school next year. Seventy percent were purchasing their own home in the local education area where they taught. Teachers traveled on the average of five miles to the school house, thirty-six miles to the hospital, thirty-six miles to a major market for shopping, twenty-five miles to the nearest secondary school, 113 miles to a college or university, and over two hundred miles to a parent's home. It is not unusual to consider that these schools are located in remote areas in the British Isles, with a significant number located on the islands in Scotland. Eighty-seven percent of the teachers indicated the reason for teaching in their current school was the desire to teach in a small school. Only 22 percent of the teachers indicated they were currently living near family members.

The average teacher spends between eight and ten hours each day on instruction, preparation, administration, correcting papers, visiting with parents, and custodial duties. Further, they manage the lunch preparation, eat lunch with the pupils, supervise the meal cleanup, and direct playground activities. Finally, they perform custodial duties after school both in the building and in the school yard. It is rare (1.8 percent) to find a teacher who is paid additional salary for these further duties.

Equally important, the teachers reported that they provided the following services for their pupils. Most (88 percent) reported providing remedial reading, over half (51 percent) teach special education, and nearly all (98 percent) administer student testing. In addition, 88 percent teach computers, manage media and school supplies; 72 percent teaching physical education, 85 percent teach art, and

65 percent teach music.

Overwhelmingly, these teachers like their work and are committed to the small school and the family atmosphere it provides. Only 5.5 percent of the teachers reported frustrations in their job responsibilities; most of their concerns regarded a lack of team sports, a lack of competition for older children and outdated facilities.

Teachers consistently mentioned their devotion to the individual student in a caring classroom atmosphere as central to their teaching experience. A significant number of teachers (70 percent) reported that the school served fewer than ten families. A majority (54 percent) sent their children five miles or less to school. Teachers rated their pupils average to high achievers and teachers reported that their students easily adjusted to secondary school after graduating from the primary school.

In the past five years, 45 percent of the one-teacher schools surveyed showed an increased enrollment. Of the 38.6 percent schools that showed a decreased enrollment, 27 percent indicated less than five student decrease over five years and 11 percent reported a decrease in more than five students in the same time. Nearly 16 percent indicated that their enrollment remained unchanged in the past five years.

All schools indicated that activities as part of school instruction were held five times a year or more. These experiences included local field trips, field trips to urban areas, computers, and guest speakers. Nearly half (47 percent) reported that the school made local field trips five times a years. An overwhelming number (98 percent) reported the students used computers daily in the school. Finally,

88 percent of the teachers reported that individualized instruction was significant to the school environment.

Although it is useful to study the data of teachers and students of one-teacher schools, it is also necessary to study the school buildings and their facilities to appreciate the school ethos. The typical building (67 percent) is between one hundred and one hundred fifty years old. The responding teachers reported a variety building conditions. Of interest are the facilities not available. For instance, 22 percent reported no storage room, 22 percent reported no kitchen area, 33 percent reported no activity room, 22 percent indicated no library room/area, 35 percent indicated no playground equipment and 28 percent indicated there were no indoor toilets at the school.

All teachers reported that the presence of high or average community support was central to the operation of the school. Forty-one percent of the schools noted that the school was used for evening or week-end activities by community clubs. And, in some cases the computer and office equipment at the school served the entire community. A significant number (70 percent) of the teachers reported high community support and thirty percent noted average support to the school.

Teachers indicated that the main reasons for the school's existence were location and community pressure. Teachers expressed a strong interest in this survey and other related analysis to this study. Eighty-five percent of the respondents agreed to a phone visit and sixty-five percent agreed to a school visit. Those who were not able to agree to either of these interviews indicated that their decision was related to a time constriction and scheduling difficulties. Admittedly these teachers do not have free time during the school day, secretarial assistance, or adequate supply (substitute) teachers.

School Strengths

Teachers indicated their school was dynamic because of the educational standards, small numbers of pupils, learning groups of different ages, and the opportunity to develop cross-curriculum teaching. Several reported that good communication between the parents and the teacher, a caring atmosphere and a wonderful ethos contributed to the strengths of the one-teacher school.

School Weaknesses

Teachers determined that weaknesses stemmed from a lack of peer group interaction and a lack of competition for bright children. Other teachers focused more on the lack of adequate staffing for the teaching of physical education, art, and music. Finally, a shortage of library materials, lack of Information Technology support and outdated facilities were teacher's concerns for the small school.

School Uniqueness

Teachers noted many unique qualities of their schools. Of interest was the publication of a community school newspaper, an interest in caring for environmental issues in the community, a close association with the local Member of Parliament and academic awards. One school reported that a former pupil currently holds the distinguished position as the chancellor of a noted American university. In addition, a school described how the students made a teacher training video for a college education program, and another reported sponsoring a foreign student to learn English..

For example, with the threat of school closure by the local council, five years ago a newly appointed teacher decided to celebrate the uniqueness of a one-teacher school. This teacher involved the local school board and community leaders. The school became actively involved in the community and was recognized through radio, television, and news coverage. By inviting the local MP to the school, giving

him an honorary school membership, sponsoring a series of community clean up projects, and publishing a school community newspaper, this school has remained open and the Local Education Council now commends this schools for its fine performance and high educational profile. Now, the school faces other challenges. Because of the school's high profile, "newcomers" are choosing to move to this community, acquire large estates, and build expensive homes, in order for their children to attend this unique school. Thus, the school is growing and may need to move eventually to a larger facility, thereby losing its uniqueness and one-teacher status.

In conclusion, underlying this research was a basic question: How do one-teacher primary schools serve the students and the community? As researchers we have presented the quantitative data reported in the survey, yet we do not believe it tells the entire story. We recognize that analysis from a different perspective is necessary to reveal the ethos of the one-teacher primary school existing in the British Isles today.

Abstract

One Teacher Primary Schools in England, Scotland and Wales

Small rural one-teacher schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world. A study of one-teacher schools in the Untied States was completed last year. A companion study of one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales is now underway. This presentation will present information on these schools regarding teachers, students, and school buildings, Contrasts between American and British schools will be discussed. The presentation will include videos and photographs.

Dr. Ivan Muse, Professor of Education, Brigham Young University
Dr. Steve Hite, Professor of Education, BYU
Ellen Powley, Coordinator of Public Programs, Museum of Art, BYU.

Rural schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world.

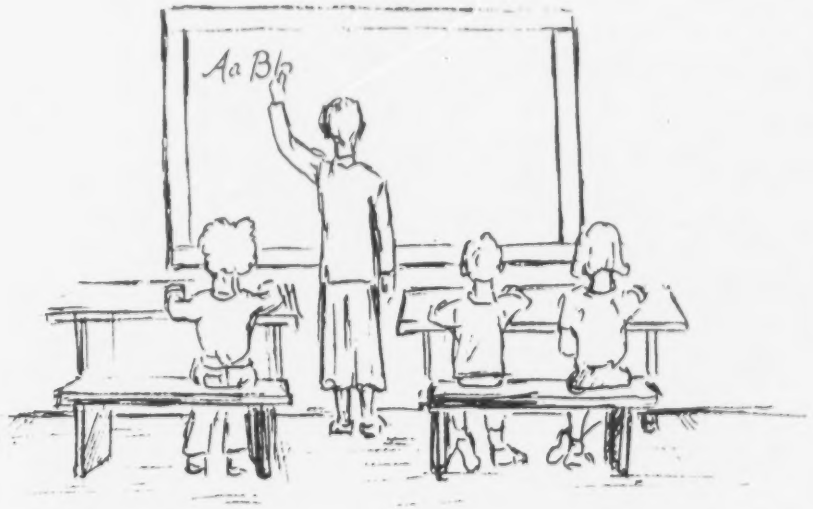
The faces of rural education:

Teacher

Student

School Buildings

Community



Location of Schools

Country	Surveyed	Identified
England	3	5
Scotland	47	53
Wales	4	5
TOTAL	54	63
Island Sch		
England	1	2
Scotland	19	25
Wales	1	1

Teachers by Age Groups

Age	Teachers by percent
21-29	0
30-39	20
40-49	43
50-59	35
60 and above	2

Total Teaching Experience

Respondent Percentages

Years	Percentage of Teachers
1 - 9	4
10 - 14	10
15 - 19	26
20 - 24	26
25 - 34	28
35+	6

Teaching
Years at Present School

Respondent Percentages

Years	At Present School
1 - 2	20
3 - 5	28
6 - 9	19
10 - 19	24
20 - 24	7
25+	2

Community Support

Teachers indicate community support for the one-teacher primary school

- 70 % high community support
- 30 % average community support

Reasons for the existence of the school

51.8 %	Location
24.2 %	Location & community pressure
18.5 %	Community pressure
3.7 %	Other
1.8 %	Funding

Highest Degree Held by Teachers of One-Teacher Schools

Percentage of Responding Teachers

Education Level	Percentage of Teachers
Certificate Only	59
Bachelor's Degree	19
Bachelor+PGCE	11
Master's Degree	11
Doctorate	0
Other	0

Occupations of Spouses

(Respondent Percentages)

Occupation	1996-97
Not married	25.9
Teacher	5.5
Agriculture	14.8
Semi-skilled or skilled	25.9
At home	5.5
School administrator	0
Self-employed	7.4
Retired	9.4
Unemployed	3.7
Widow	1.9

Distances Traveled by Teachers

Destination	Average Miles Traveled
Your school	5
Hospital	35.7
Market for major shopping	36
Secondary school	24.8
College/University	112.8
Parent's home	201.5

Enrollment Trends in One- Teacher Primary Schools

A Five Year View, 1992-1997

- 45.5 % Increased Enrollment
- 38.6 % Decreased Enrollment
- 15.9 % Enrollment unchanged

Activities as part of School Instruction

Times per year
Respondent Percents

Activities	Often (5 times)	Sometimes (3-4)	Infrequent (1-2)	Not at all
local field trips	47.2	39.6	11.3	1.9
field trips to city	8.5	30	52.1	8.5
television	83.4	7.4	7.4	1.8
computers	98	2	0	0
guest speakers	22.2	42.6	31.5	3.7
peer tutuoring	23	18.8	35.2	23
parents as aides	26.9	26.9	17.3	28.9
individualized ins	88	4	4	4
parent-teacher co	26.9	46.2	21.2	5.7

Age of School Buildings

Years	Percentage of Buildings
1-45	19.2
50-99	11.5
100-150	67.3
Over 150	2

Available Facilities in One-Teacher Schools

Percentage of Schools

Facility	Available/Adequate	Available/Inadequate	Not Available
Cloak room	72	26	2
Storage room	39	39	22
Kitchen	59	19	22
Activity room	52	15	33
Heating:			
Electric	62.9	1.8	0
Coal	1.8	0	0
Wood	0	0	0
Oil	29.9	1.8	0
Peat	1.8	0	0
Air conditioning	0	0	0
Library room/area	46	32	22
Play area	70	26	4
Playground equipment	39	26	35
Indoor toilets	57	15	28